

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 25, 2006**

Members Present: Morris, Carroll, Endres, Harden, Lank, Lardizzzone, Magner, Newstadt, Thompson, Wasson and Webb

Members Excused: Ennis, Kitson, Spitzfaden and Timberman

Staff Present: Davila

Guests: Dean Reid (Veterans Home Administrator), BG Dick Bundy, Al Carter (SOS), Ron Sarg (MOAA), Burton Barr (NARFE) and John M Dill (FSCWOA)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Commission Thompson opened the meeting for Chairman Morris who was attending another meeting concerning veterans' issues.

Mr. Reid reported that he attended a meeting three weeks ago in which the admissions package was reviewed. The Director of Nursing has been hired and her name is Brenda Dunning. He is nearing completion of the Administrator in Training program (AIT) and in June will be participating in a pre-test seminar for the Nursing Home Administrator exam. He wants to take advantage of every opportunity to get out and talk with veterans and the members of veteran organizations about the Veterans Home. The Veterans Home construction is on target.

BG Bundy reported on Senate Bill 95, which is an attempt to make military retired pay exempt from Delaware taxes. If the bill passes, Delaware would be the 15th state to implement.

Mr. Sarg discussed information pertaining to MOAA scholarship and provided a handout.

**MOTION BY WASSON TO ACCEPT MARCH COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY WEBB,
MOTION CARRIED.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Newstadt reported that they had a Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) Meeting on April 18, 2006, at the Northern Cemetery. The members seemed to be content and satisfied with the condition of the Cemetery. He further reported that two members of the committee will do a final walk through to make sure that the placement of the markers matches the Cemetery's inventory. He also wanted to thank the members of the Commission that attended the meeting. The six month intervals for meetings was discussed and found acceptable by the FACC.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Carroll reported that Frank Richardson will be the guest speaker at the Memorial Day Ceremony at the bridge on May 30, 2006.

FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

No report.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Commissioner Carroll reported that the Veterans Home fund total is \$164,628.49 as of April 24, 2006. He also provided an update on how things were going at the VA in Wilmington.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Thompson stated he completed the report on the nursing home surveys and it has been sent to Senator Bunting. He also highlighted a few points derived from the report. Chairman Morris pointed out that each Commissioner received a handout about HB 113 (requiring gas stations to have a calling device for a person with a disability) and discussion followed.

PERSONNEL

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that two Conservation Technicians were hired for the Northern Cemetery and they are now fully staffed.

MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

No report.

HOME DEDICATION

Commissioner Harden reported that the Veterans Home Dedication & Cornerstone Ceremony is still scheduled for December 7, 2006, but no time has been set as yet.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Commissioner Newstadt inquired about participation in the Newark Parade. Commissioners Magner, Lardizzone, Wasson and Harden reported that their organizations will be participating. Chairman Morris reported that his organization has made a donation. Chairman Morris requested that the Commissioners contact Commissioner Lank about their different events.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Newstadt – (JWV) – The JWV will have their installation luncheon on April 28, 2006, which will kick off the spring meeting schedule and poppy drive.

Wasson (DELVETS) – Their meetings are the 1st Wednesday of each month. Last month they invited Dean Reid to their meeting and he did a very good job.

Harden (WAVES) – Reported that last month they had their meeting in which they installed officers and had a luncheon. After this Saturday's meeting, they will have a break for a few months. Three members attended the commissioning of the new ship destroyer USS Forrest Sherman in Pensacola, FL. They added another unit, bringing their total number of units to 154. The new unit is called the Relentless WAVES and is made up of active duty women on the new ship. The VA Patient Carnival will be held on May 6, 2006. They will have booths, motorcycles, corvettes, and the cadets from the Delaware Military Academy.

Webb – (VVA) – The VVA will participate in the VA Patient Carnival and both Newark and Wilmington parades.

Thompson (MCL) – Reported that they will have a ceremony at Sharon Hill Cemetery on May 29, 2006, at 9:00 AM. On May 30, 2006, they will be involved with the ceremonies at both the Bridge and Cemetery.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Announced that their outreach van will be coming in from National Headquarters to Rehoboth Beach on May 12 & 13, 2006, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. They will be doing veterans claims and conducting a membership drive. DAV is sponsoring a "Day at the Blue Rocks" on Sunday, July 30, 2006, at 1:30 PM, tickets are \$9.00. He needs to have all the money into the Blue Rocks by June the 30, 2006, so they can print the tickets. They have 100 seats blocked out and there will be a ceremony at the beginning of the game.

Carroll (MOPH) – Stated that MOPH will be participating in the VA Patient Carnival. The New Castle Chapter 9377 will hold their 13th annual brunch on Saturday May 6, 2006. The U.S. Postal Department and Arlington Cemetery will have services on May 16, 2006, for the new Purple Heart stamp.

Chairman Morris presented a check for \$200 to Commissioner Carroll, as a donation made by the MOPH Chapter in Millsboro for the Sussex County Korean War monument.

Magner (AMVETS) – Reported that on April 13, 2006, Post 100 presented the Air Force JROTC award to William Penn High School. On May 6, 2006, AMVETS will have two booths and a vendor trailer at the Patient Carnival. AMVETS State Convention will be held on May 20, 2006, at the UAW 1183 Retiree Hall in Newark. On May 26, 2006, there will be an Army JROTC presentation at the Newark High School.

Lank (MOWW) – The MOWW had a tour of the Ft. Miles Installation and a luncheon where they installed a new Commander, Col (Ret) Carlton Witte. The museum is not yet done, but will be very nice when completed.

Endres (40 & 8) – Reported that his organization donated \$100 to the flag program at the Sussex Cemetery. Also, the American Legion post he belongs to will be donating \$500 for the flag program and \$100 for the monument in Georgetown.

Morris (American Legion) – His organization will be presenting a check for \$150.00 to the Newark Parade. They are getting ready for their convention.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Chairman Morris reported that he had the opportunity to visit with Senator Bunting, Al Carter, and Tony Davila, to discuss some issues. The Senator asked that I give him a call to schedule a visit with him. He could then give the Commission some feedback on some issues so we could talk to our organizations about what this legislation means concerning the oversight of the Veterans Home. Chairman Morris asked the Commissioners to start thinking about how they would like the alternative funding account controlled. If it turns out to be something that would require legislation, it would probably not be submitted until next year. He also reported that there has not been a direct response from the letters that were sent to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. He reiterated that it is important for those two committees to meet with the Commission of Veterans Affairs. He will be addressing that issue when he meets with Senator Bunting.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Newstadt made some positive comments about the attendance of the VVA at a funeral he attended. He announced that on May 4, 2006, at Wright Patterson AFB, there will be an aircraft tail dedication ceremony of C-141 #177. The plane will be moved to the museum. Mr. Davila announced that the Nason Construction Employee Appreciation picnic has been rescheduled for May 17, 2006, 2:00 PM. The Steering Committee meeting on May 3, 2006, 2:00 PM, has been moved from this office to the Nason Construction trailer at the Veterans Home site. Mr. Sarg announced that if anyone is interested in attending the Brad Smith dinner, please contact him by May 18, 2006.

UPCOMING DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Bond Bill Hearing: May 11, 2006, 12:30 PM at Legislative Hall; JFC Hearing Room

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MAY 23, 2006 (11:00 AM)

**LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED